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ABSTRACT

A project was designed to define the extent of the courses and programs available to unemployed adults and to investigate the problems involved in maintaining an up-to-date information, guidance, and counseling service in the United Kingdom. Interviews were conducted with 100 unemployed adults in Nottingham, England. Information was sought on interviewees' past and present use of education and training, awareness of local provision, employment history and aspirations, and attitudes toward education, guidance facilities, and information about them. Agencies and organizations closely associated with unemployed adults and employers were also surveyed. Recommendations were made for setting up an information, guidance, and counseling network. A central coordinating unit was suggested to serve as a focal point for a citywide network of agencies offering support to the unemployed. After the need for a collaborative multiagency network was identified, the project instigated several pilot initiatives, including a directory of agencies, using the media, information pack, informal agencies forum, and collaborative outreach. A model of a citywide information and guidance network was proposed. Suggestions were also made for associated curriculum and staff development. (Appendixes include a bibliography, interview schedule, and staff development checklist.) (YLB)

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Anxious To Work

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- [ ] REPLAN is a programme to promote the development of education opportunities for the adult unemployed.
- [ ] REPLAN aims to help those who provide education by identifying and publicising the most effective ways and means of meeting the educational needs of the unemployed, and by encouraging closer collaboration between the various providing agencies.
- [ ] The programme is funded by the Department of Education and Science and the Welsh Office; certain elements of the programme are also supported financially by the Manpower Services Commission. On behalf of REPLAN, the FEU and the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) are managing complementary programmes of development and NIACE is employing and managing an advisory team of field officers led by a national co-ordinator.
- [ ] Staff development programmes are being organised by NIACE in collaboration with the Regional Advisory Councils for further education, with participants drawn from a wide range of institutions and agencies in the statutory and voluntary sectors.
- [ ] Education Support Grants are being allocated to many local education authorities to strengthen the planning and co-ordination of provision for unemployed adults in their areas.
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Dear Sir/Madam,

ANXIOUS TO WORK

Attached is an FEU REPLAN project report, commissioned from Basford Hall College of Further Education in Nottingham.

The main purpose of the project was to make proposals for a city-wide guidance network and to develop new provision for the adult unemployed.

In an interesting and readable report, positive proposals are made about both guidance and curriculum development. In particular, a guidance network jointly resourced by MSC and the LEA is proposed for Nottingham. In this the education service and its institutions would work as partners with other providers of guidance. The intention of this is not to detach guidance from its essential place in the curricular process but to recognise the potential for development of guidance to be achieved by fully exploiting the various existing contributors in the community, some of which, like the careers and library services, have some statutory responsibilities.

Another strong message arising from the project is that provision of education/training for unemployed people in colleges requires a firm and explicit college policy. Additionally, in this case, a Central Programmes Unit had a significant effect on developments in the College. Its brief was to ensure the College was responding flexibly and speedily to the needs of industry and the community.

The report has a clear foundation in the actual experience of the unemployed. The methodology described in Chapter 2 describes how two project workers interviewed a hundred volunteers. The insights, experiences, frustrations and aspirations revealed comprise a solid basis for the recommendations made in the report. Set against this are the less certain attitudes from the colleges and providers. As the survey discovered, the vast majority of unemployed adults are anxious to work. This report makes some suggestions as to how LEAs and their colleges can appear to be more anxious to help.

Yours faithfully,

Jack Mansell

JACK MANSELL
Chief Officer

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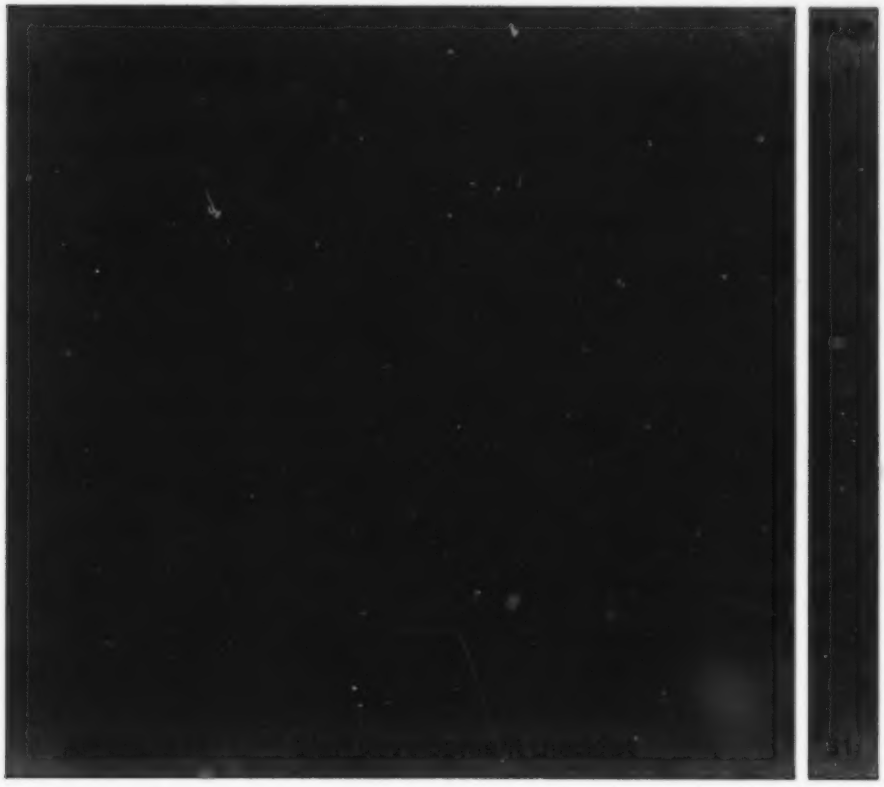

1 INTRODUCTION

THE REPORT

1. This report describes a two-year FEU REPLAN project in which we define the extent of the courses and programmes available to the adult unemployed, and investigate the problems involved in maintaining an up-to-date information, guidance and counselling service. Having defined the problem, we suggest models and describe practical attempts to deal with the situation, together with the associated curriculum and staff development.

2. We hope the report will be of use to those who are faced, as we were, with the problem of finding some order in the often bewildering multiplicity of schemes and courses provided by Government, local authorities and independent operators in any large town or conurbation. A co-operative information network is an ideal solution to the problem of knowing what is available, and where. However, the providers do not always come together easily, and we discuss initiatives from 'below' as well as from 'above'.

3. We draw on the comments of the unemployed, the providers and local employers to suggest approaches to a curriculum for unemployed adults. Such a curriculum often demands techniques and skills which differ from those of traditional training and FE, and we discuss staff development programmes designed to meet these needs.

THE PROJECT

4. The project arose from the increasing difficulty staff at Basford Hall College experienced in keeping track of the training and job creation projects available in Nottingham. As unemployment increased, and staff found that more and more of their time was spent counselling the unemployed, the rapid growth of schemes of all types within the conurbation made fully informed counselling virtually impossible.

5. Once approval for the project was granted, consultation with FEU staff produced an agreed programme and methods of investigation. After an initial search through the literature and contact with related projects and developments across the country, the project team addressed the problem of gathering information. One hundred unemployed adults were interviewed, using a schedule which attempted to find out about past and present use of education/training, awareness of local provision, employment history and job aspirations. The interviews also explored attitudes towards education, training, guidance and counselling and to information about them. To establish the extent of existing provision, questionnaires were sent to colleges, the MSC, voluntary bodies and a selection of local employers. These needed to be followed up by personal visits, both for clarification and, in some cases, to elicit any response at all.

6. In the light of the information produced by the surveys, the project set about the problem of improving the information and guidance service to the unemployed – with varying degrees of success. Some of the suggestions made were taken up, others remain untested. Continuation of the established initiatives and the utilisation of the other suggestions depends on the willingness and/or ability of one or more of the major organisations involved to accept responsibility for them.

THE NATIONAL PICTURE

7. The growth of unemployment and, more disturbingly, of long-term unemployment – with more than one-third of those registered now having been out of work for over 12 months – has been addressed by successive governments since the early 1970s. MSC's *New Training Initiative: An Agenda for Action* (1981) established a new emphasis on occupational training, with intensive courses tailored to employers' needs. Previous speculative training gave way to updating of existing specific work-related skills, and training for self-employment. The Community Programme (CP), the Voluntary Projects Programme, REPLAN and, more recently, Restart have all attempted to improve the situation in their own ways and have given rise to a multiplicity of opportunities covering a wide range of needs.

8. The demise of occupational guidance units led to a reduction in occupational and educational counselling for adults, but the increase in adult unemployment has accentuated the need for the restoration of such services. In response, we see the Government, via MSC and DES, supporting initiatives such as Restart and projects developing computer-based guidance systems. There has been a parallel growth of private, voluntary and local authority funded guidance services. The establishment of 'Job Clubs' and the launching of a series of radio and television programmes aimed at the unemployed are also contributing to the dissemination of information. The Training Access Points Scheme (TAPS) initiative is also a major new development by the MSC, aimed at improving access to information relating to educational and training opportunities.

THE LOCAL PICTURE

9. The City and County Borough of Nottingham is the centre of the South Nottinghamshire conurbation. It ranks eighth in the table of most disadvantaged urban areas outside London. The conurbation is home to a university, a polytechnic and the unusally high number of six colleges of further education – a situation which the local authority is currently considering.

10. Nottingham's broad industrial base cushioned the initial effects of the general economic recession, but there has been an accelerated decline in employment opportunities, particularly in traditional manufacturing, over the past five years. Although slightly offset by an expansion of employment in the service sector, the underlying unemployment trend is still upwards and many of the jobs which have appeared relate to part-time work undertaken by women. 49% of job vacancies are for clerical staff, machine operators, distribution, cleaning and personnel services and catering workers.

11. Roughly one in seven of the conurbation's workforce is now unemployed, with a rise from 4.4% in 1979 to over 13% in 1986. In some areas of the city the unemployment rate is over 40%; almost half of the total have been out of work for over a year. As in the rest of the country, unemployment is disproportionately high amongst ethnic minorities, the unskilled, those with disabilities and the over 50s.

12. To meet this rapid growth in unemployment, there has been a series of local initiatives representing a wealth of resources and expertise. However, their establishment has often been the result of *ad hoc* responses, resulting in a broad but uncoordinated provision, with much of the work fragmented, isolated and inadequately organised. Both City and County Councils are taking an active role, particularly through their support of community employment schemes and the work of the Economic Development Units (EDUs), to encourage local enterprise. The setting up of a TAPS network, to be managed by the city's EDU, is the most recent development. Thus, an additional aim of the FEU project was to establish a means of co-ordinating this proliferation of local initiatives for the unemployed.

OTHER PROJECTS

13. Other projects within the conurbation related to this project include:

- the BEGIN Project, sponsored by ALBSU, providing guidance and counselling for Adult Basic Education (ABE) on a countywide basis;
- the 'Outreach Project' at South Nottinghamshire College of FE, which has two outreach workers sponsored by NIACE to make contact with local unemployed adults to establish and respond to their educational and guidance needs;
- the Open University's 'Community Education Project' which is seeking to develop local self-help groups for the unemployed using the community education packs.

2 SURVEYS

SURVEY OF UNEMPLOYED

Methodology

14. The aim was to produce an impression of the needs and expectations of the adult unemployed. One hundred volunteers were interviewed; the interviewers attempted to ensure a fair representation in terms of age, gender, colour, ability and social class. In order that all key areas of investigation were covered, the two interviewers followed a guided interview schedule (see Appendix III) recording answers on a separate schedule, and two pilot designs were tested before the final shape of the schedule was determined. Information was sought on the interviewees' past and present use of education/training, their awareness of local provision, employment history and aspirations, and also attitudes towards education, guidance facilities and information about them.

15. The interviews were conducted in a wide variety of locations, in private, and with every effort made to create an informal, unthreatening atmosphere. Interviewees were encouraged to express themselves freely and time was set aside after each interview for a guidance session, if this was required.

Findings

Employment history and aspirations

16. 87% of the sample were actively seeking work, mostly with little success:

'I go to the Jobcentre every day at 9am.'

'I've applied for about 30 jobs in two months. I've had one unsuccessful interview.'

17. Many found the cost of looking for work a handicap – even a prohibition:

'I'm annoyed at spending so much money going for interviews or writing for jobs.'

'I sometimes travel long distances for interviews.'

18. Initially, there is a confidence that a job will soon be found, but after about six months, a change in attitude occurs:

'I don't expect to be unemployed long.'

'It never occurred to me – only hit me recently that there's a big job problem.'

'After 30 years of work, I feel anger and distress at being on the scrap heap.'

19. Several of the unskilled had developed a pattern of frequent job changes to alleviate boredom, but had been caught out when unemployment became widespread. The 'last in, first out' system can lead to a series of redundancies:

'The work was too boring, so I changed.'

'I've always gone straight into another job.'

'...I worked for 20 years for one company, made redundant, then made redundant twice more...'

20. Seven interviewees had not worked for five years; 13 had never had proper paid employment. Some were aware of being an alienated sub-group:

'Being unemployed is like living with apartheid.'

'I feel I would be letting down my (unemployed) friends if I got a job.'

21. Temporary jobs, mostly with Community Programmes, accounted for much of the work done in the previous three years, often more to give structure to life rather than to seek training:

'If you're used to work, you need the routine of work.'

22. However, some found difficulty getting on schemes, or were frustrated when they did:

'I sent four applications for CP – got no replies.'

'When visitors came round, all the new tools were brought out that we weren't allowed to use.'

23. Interviewees gave many reasons for their unemployment. Those without qualifications felt the need for them:

'I was actively looking for work. They don't want me now, they keep asking for qualifications they know I haven't got.'

24. Some felt that age was a problem:

'Employers are more interested in taking on youngsters because they're cheap.'

'Sometimes I'm too young, sometimes too old.'

25. Some blamed external factors, or the 'Catch 22' situation of employers preferring to employ those with a recent job record:

'I wanted to start a business, but I had no luck with the bank.'

'I'm out of work because of the capitalist system...'

'I've been out of work too long. Employers aren't interested in me any more.'

26. Lack of relevant experience and a poor work record were also quoted. Job acceptability centred mainly on the level of wages, but most people also mentioned job satisfaction:

'I'm looking at almost any job area, but money is frequently inadequate.'

'Labouring, within reason, with some job satisfaction and £80 minimum.'

27. Several family men were faced with the dilemma of being offered less than they would receive 'on the dole', as wage levels were depressed by high unemployment. There were also many references to loss of status, self-confidence and emotional problems resulting from unemployment:

'Most jobs are too low paid compared with the last job.'

'I want to return to work for my own self-respect...'

'I didn't tell my wife for three months that I'd lost my job.'

'You think you are going round the bend – the inability to hammer out any chink of light turns the failure back on you.'

'I am suffering.'

28. Many realised that they would have to change their area of work and 68% of the sample were prepared to look at alternatives:

'I'm prepared to do anything, I've applied for lots of jobs.'

Education, training and interests

29. Most had a favourable reaction to the idea of retraining, provided that it would help them to find work:

'A course would be worthwhile if, at the end of it, I could apply the skill in a work situation.'

30. About half had given thought to an alternative, although some were patently unrealistic in their aims. There was widespread ignorance of the qualifications and/or training needed for specific jobs, and of what the job might involve. Many had difficulty differentiating between vocational training and education courses, while many of the younger ones felt the need for experience as well as qualifications:

'I've got an HND but no practical experience. Employers want at least two years experience.'

31. Unwillingness to retrain was most marked amongst the over 45s, and amongst those whose qualifications and experience were still theoretically marketable:

'It's not worthwhile studying or retraining at 55.'

'I don't need retraining. I can offer an employer 34 years experience and good references.'

'I'm a skilled plumber. Why do I need retraining?'

32. There were repeated accounts of the individual failing to use the system to best advantage, and of the system failing to respond adequately to the client. Poor information and lack of guidance had led 28% to experience problems in taking up some kind of provision:

'I rang up about language courses, but they'd already started. They didn't give me any suggestions about anything else.'

'...I went four times in one day from the Jobcentre to the College and back again. The course was terminated.'

33. Disillusion, embarrassment and feelings of futility were apparent, especially among those who had been away from conventional learning for some time:

'I feel self-conscious and defensive.'

'I've no confidence in finding the right course.'

'I'd like a computing course, but they seem to think you can't learn anything over 40.'

'I was put off doing anything by being refused a TOPS course.'

34. Awareness of provision was low. Only 14 had heard of the 21-hour rule!

'I don't want a course in case I lose my benefit.'

'I rang around the colleges for 'O' levels. They all said yes, but that I couldn't get a grant. Nobody told about the 21-hour rule.'

35. Fifty respondents quoted lack of information as a deterrent and 63 responses reflected insecurity and unfamiliarity with the system:

'Courses need advertising better.'

'I usually find out through friends – there's not a lot of information about.'

36. Many were fearful of the possible cost of courses, while few seemed to know of the concessions available:

'...the cost frightens me. I never thought of asking for assistance.'

'I was told it was £18 a term. I can't afford that.'

37. Even bus fares could be a barrier, but many were prepared to travel:

'The bus fare was £7 a week – too much on the dole.'

'If it was a worthwhile course with job prospects, I would travel anywhere.

38. Leisure activities seem to have little place in the life of the unemployed. Ignorance of available concessions was widespread and several people expressed a form of moral disapproval:

'I didn't know about "Sport for the Unemployed".' (A local concessionary scheme)

'I stopped going swimming and dancing... to save money. It seems frivolous when I should be looking for work.'

'I can't afford to spend time on leisure – I'm too busy looking for employment.'

39. When asked what type of training courses might be attractive, interviewees were generally confused about specific learning needs, and about courses that might be of assistance. Most set the greatest store by a certificate or other tangible qualification:

'A certificate at the end... gives you confidence.'

'I would like to do a part-time course, but employers might not think it was worthwhile unless you get a certificate.'

40. A majority expressed doubts about long-term training which might interfere with the chances of getting a job:

'I don't want to commit myself to a course in case a job comes up.'

41. A large proportion would prefer a daytime to an evening course with flexible timing to allow for 'signing out':

'It would give me something to get up for.'

'Social contact; I'm on my own all day.'

42. Opinions differed on the attraction of courses specifically for the unemployed. One-third of the sample was dubious:

'...I object to just being lumped together with other unemployed.'

'...to go out and meet people, including employed people.'

43. While 10% could see advantages:

'If it's purely for the unemployed, you can make it more of a social occasion – you've got more in common.'

'Only unemployed. They think they're better than us if they're in work.'

44. One-third expressed a preference for informality in the classroom, and stressed the need to be treated as adults:

'I'd like to be relaxed.'

'You need treating with respect – it works both ways.'

45. However, a lack of confidence led some to prefer the teacher to take a firm lead, at least in the initial stages:

'I feel secure with the teacher in front.'

'If it starts very formal it takes the nerves out of you – afterwards you might change.'

Information and guidance

46. Over half had never asked for guidance or counselling, because they were unaware that help might be available, considered themselves too old, or had simply never thought of it:

'What you don't know about you can't ask for.'

'I've seen no publicity or information and I've no confidence to ask.'

47. Some felt that they would have asked for help, had they been encouraged, but believed that, although the 'front-line' workers were doing their best, neither the time nor the resources seemed to be available for long discussions:

'I've asked for advice in a roundabout way, but they didn't have the time.'

'No-one has the time to help.'

'I tried a college, but I was fobbed off, they were too busy, no-one knew who to put me through to.'

48. Fifty-nine per cent had made some move to ask for guidance, typically from only one source – the Jobcentres being the most popular. Many spoke of misinformation and the difficulties of getting past switchboards or finding a useful contact:

'...there's no-one really to help you... they don't have time to talk to you... everyone expects you to know what to do... it takes you weeks to work your way round the system... it's easier to stay at home and not bother...'

49. Seventy per cent responded positively when asked if they would like more guidance, and were keen to express opinions on the shape of the system. There was general disillusionment with the existing difficulties of access. Most wanted up-to-date information to be easily available, and a system which would refer them swiftly and accurately to their chosen provision:

'...I don't want to be passed around.'

'...you need someone with time and information.'

50. Other problems included the difficulty of asking for help in public and the consequent need for private consultation:

'...everyone can hear, so I've never asked for help.'

'...better... where nobody knows you.'

51. Most felt that a main, central location with good links with other organisations would best serve their needs, making transport easy and giving the opportunity to include other central amenities in the same visit:

'In the city, on a bus route.'

'...where all resources are in one place, and everyone can get there.'

'A main centre with outside links. A wide network which involves all the other agencies.'

52. A quarter – more than all other groups who suggested links to existing services – felt that any information/guidance agency should be clearly independent:

'Very independent – or it's nothing new...'

'It should be city-based, not dependent on other agencies.'

53. While some wished advisory staff to have some personal experience of unemployment, most stressed the need for an expert service, staffed by a variety of professionals:

> *'... independent... with lecturers, careers officers and the Jobcentre – no volunteers and no Community Programme workers.'*
>
> *'A professional service, but caring.'*
>
> *'... a cross-section of staff who can help with benefits jobs and education.'*

54. Most of all, people wanted a friendly and sympathetic service:

> *'...a friendly atmosphere... being kicked all the time is not a good experience.'*
>
> *'Someone friendly and smiling...'*
>
> *'...welcoming to suit all kinds of people – not snobby. People must be made to feel confident. The workers must not be patronising.'*

55. After the interview, many wished to continue with a personal counselling session. A large proportion were amazed at the breadth of provision available, and reported feeling a more positive attitude to their situation:

> *'Just looking at your list has opened my eyes.'*
>
> *'I feel better for talking to someone, and to have someone listen to me. It feels better to release feelings about my situation. The interview has shown me new avenues.'*
>
> *'I'm not daft after all!'*

SURVEY OF PROVIDERS

Methodology

56. A major part of the project workers' initial research concerned the identification of:

(a) those agencies and organisations in the Nottingham conurbation closely associated with unemployed adults;

(b) the nature and extent of each agency's involvement.

57. Employing a mixture of survey methods – questionnaire, interviews and visits – contact was made with over one hundred agencies and organisations working in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors. In particular, close examination was made of the six colleges of further education, by tradition major providers of adult education and training.

Findings

Colleges of further education

Response to the survey

58. A degree of reluctance to participate in the survey was noted amongst some departmental heads. As one participating principal commented, this may have been due to the fact that certain departments had embarrassingly little to offer unemployed adults.

Identification of a priority group

59. While colleges recognised a general duty to cater for all section of the community, only one had evolved a clear, stated policy of commitment or intent, whereby a significant shift in the allocation of resources could be effected in favour of the unemployed. Colleges were aware that increasing numbers of unemployed people were enrolling for courses, but the exact nature and extent of usage was unknown. The need for a centralised system for monitoring the numbers involved and the type of courses taken has assumed increasing importance.

60. Rather than developing new modes of delivery and provision, colleges were concentrating on slotting the unemployed into existing mainstream courses. This lack of progress was attributed to reluctance to commit limited resources to new developments until the real needs of the unemployed had been identified. While two colleges had outreach workers to increase community liaison, it was felt that greater use should be made of departmental advisory committees as vehicles for creating an awareness of needs and for establishing closer links with other community bodies. There was a common concern about the inadequacies of existing committees and their role in raising awareness of local needs.

Access to provision

61. The survey showed that all six colleges provided courses that took account of the 21-hour rule. Infill to mainstream courses was offered widely on a discretionary basis, as was a limited amount of flexi-study and open learning. The waiving of tuition fees and the payment of examination entries were important concessions made to assist or enable the unemployed to enrol for existing courses. Child-minding facilities were available at two colleges and, since the survey was undertaken, all six colleges have organised crèche provision. Although there was little available outside traditional term times, some short courses and weekend workshops had been run. Funding was identified as the major handicap to initiating further provision for the unemployed; MSC financing was relied on for specific courses, although this imposed conditions on what could be offered.

Access to information

62. Although each college had staff with responsibility for general publicity and advertising of courses, it was felt that more resources should be allocated to marketing. Conventional channels were used to the full – local media, prospectuses, leafleting, open days, displays and regular mailings of interested organisations – but it was pointed out that college efforts frequently failed to reach certain client groups, in particular the unemployed. The colleges were clearly concerned about the effectiveness of their marketing strategies in reaching the widest cross-section of the community. In advertising provision for the unemployed, only limited use was made of personal contact with the clients and potential referral agencies, so response rates tended to be low. There needed to be more opportunities to develop such approaches. For individuals seeking information on college provision, the first point of contact is generally the switchboard, reception or general office. While administrative staff try to be helpful, they are often handicapped by lack of knowledge and suitable training that can assist them with information and advice giving.

Availability of guidance and counselling facilities

63. Educational and vocational guidance facilities were generally restricted to full-time and day-release students, thus excluding adults who attended part-time or in the evening. The lack of adequate guidance support as part of admission policy frequently resulted in adult students being admitted on to inappropriate courses. There was general agreement on the need for more guidance support for adults and part-time learners, many of whom might be unemployed. Induction policy, too, was haphazard, often being limited and informal and not seen as an integral part of a learning course. All colleges stated a willingness to participate, within their resource limits, in an educational guidance and referral service for adults (see Chapter 3).

The college image

64. The colleges did not present an attractive image to adults generally. The provision of adult facilities, for example separate common rooms, coffee-making facilities, crèche, etc., creates a more welcoming, user-friendly environment.

Departmental responses

65. Responses from individual departments showed the degree of variation in involvement with unemployed adults. A commonly expressed sentiment from vocationally orientated departments was that their major preoccupation was in meeting industry's training needs. This was particularly true where traditional provision was still buoyant, and appeared to be holding back new developments:

> *'This department specialises in courses for the employed that are complementary to experiences in industry. This leaves little time to develop courses for the unemployed.'*

66. This rather limited perception of provision contrasted with that of other departments, mainly Adult Education and General Studies, where it was not uncommon for 50% of enrolments to be unemployed. Only a few departments offered specific provision for the unemployed and in most cases this was MSC-funded. LEA-funded provision included a non-vocational drama class, a secretarial course for mature students, and GCE classes. Infill on existing courses presented problems in terms of administrative regulations laid down by examination boards and the inability to provide work experience was also cited as a problem, as was the inability to offer sufficient tutorial support to infill students to maintain motivation. One department had formulated an experiential learning policy to allow adults with non-standard qualifications and experience to enter courses.

Staff development needs

67. The departmental surveys showed that working with the unemployed underlined gaps in the skills and knowledge of tutors – typically, grade I lecturers and part-time staff. Perceived staff development needs included, amongst others, liaison and outreach, guidance and counselling, identification of skill needs and mixed-level/ability teaching. There was a strong undercurrent of feeling that in-service training for appropriate staff was a prerequisite to initiating any new curricula for the unemployed (see Chapter 5).

Awareness of needs

68. It was clear from respondents that there was an awareness of gaps in provision for employed adults which included an insufficient number of vocational courses and the need for more 21-hour non-vocational provision. Other gaps noted were courses for women only, bridging courses between basic education and 'O' levels, more technician courses and linked-skills courses with literacy/numeracy integrated in vocationally based training.

69. The attraction of examination classes was apparent, with their recognised status and greater availability being noted. Improved access to certified courses was deemed very important but a need was also identified for some kind of certified pre-vocational course for adults which contained a common core element such as counselling, basic education, computer appreciation, confidence building or awareness training. The core would be integrated with specialist vocational skill training. Courses involving information technology were cited as having strong appeal, as were those with a practical element offering skills for self-development in DIY. A general observation noted the instrumental function of much of the provision taken up by the unemployed.

Constraints on future developments

70. Several departments expressed a willingness to develop more appropriate provision for the unemployed, and several examples of potentially good practice were cited. However, financial constraints, often related to short-term MSC funding policies and the vagaries of LEA funding, were identified as major obstacles, as was the lack of suitably qualified staff and workshop facilities. The fact that courses for the unemployed were perceived as non-profit-making and seldom self-financing meant that college managers were loath to 'waste' limited resources on them.

> *'There is no money and no plans for future provision other than infill. I've made various suggestions for courses over the last few months but all I've got for my trouble is one small group of part-time students doing 'O' levels on a 21-hour basis.'*

71. In addition, it was noted that take-up of available provision was often disappointingly low – a possible reflection of ineffective advertising or insufficient awareness among the unemployed:

> *'We are prepared to run courses for this group, but experience suggests that very few unemployed are aware of their right to attend college on a 21-hour basis. Consequently, they don't bother finding out what's available.'* (Head of Department)

72. Conflict with other bodies, e.g. the DHSS, LEA, with regard to regulations, grants, definitions of part-time study and other bureaucratic procedures had led to proposed courses being abandoned. This created frustration and disillusion on the part of course planners. Inadequate knowledge of needs also meant some departments were unwilling to set up 'speculative' courses.

> *'With over 36,000 people unemployed in Nottingham, with the nature of job vacancies being obscure and the reasons for vacancies quite often unrelated to the labour available, the factors that prompt our menu of provision are related to how we perceive the area's job needs rather than a more scientific approach.'* (Head of Department)

73. While negotiation of learning agendas was considered an essential aspect of courses for adults, reservations as to the feasibility of a truly student-centred approach were expressed, given the traditional institutional framework with its rigid departmental boundaries. The need for resources to be directed to pre-course counselling, ongoing support and follow-up of students was widely articulated.

Other providers

The diversity of agencies

74. The survey work revealed a great diversity of agencies within Nottingham dealing with the unemployed. It was apparent that a major concern of a large proportion of these was recreational and social provision, besides that of basic skills training, advice giving, referral, voluntary work, community employment and counselling. (A full list of agencies, with details of their work and contact names, was collated by the project team.)

75. Several of the agencies were linked, albeit loosely. Another common characteristic was their short-term, temporary funding which often caused problems in continuity of provision.

Perceived needs

76. As well as factual information, the project surveys sought to elicit comment on, attitudes to, and perceptions of, unemployed adults. Since many of the agencies were in regular contact with the unemployed, they had valuable insights to offer. As the quotations below illustrate, the perceived needs were extensive and wide-ranging, although based on observation rather than hard evidence.

> *'We seem to be defining a need for more advanced levels of training, leading to higher skill levels.'*
>
> *'Training for machinists – there's no provision yet the industry's crying out for them.'*
>
> *'More courses to help people cope with unemployment.'*
>
> *'Courses in developing community initiatives, self-help, raising awareness of how to get involved and take control of your own destiny.'*
>
> *'A relocating of courses to take account of working-class reluctance to be in a formal educational setting.'*
>
> *'The increase in enforced leisure time is not being adequately addressed. More recreational activities that are inexpensive.'*

Co-ordination of services

77. Many agencies indicated an urgent need for the co-ordination of existing local provision and services for unemployed adults. There was wide support for the idea of a centralised, comprehensive information bank accesible to all agencies, offering advice and guidance to the unemployed. The major benefits of co-ordination relate to increases in public awareness of the contributing agencies' services, plus increased benefits brought about by co-operation in marketing and publicising complementary services. Suggestions as to how the service should be co-ordinated included:

> *'A simple network with an identifiable centre.'*
>
> *'A committee organised by committed representatives from relevant agencies with a brief to design short- and long-term programmes on a city-wide basis.'*

Collaboration

78. Many of the contacted agencies appreciated the benefits they, and ultimately their clients, would gain from inter-agency collaboration. These could be summarised as:

- ☐ the improvement of communication and information flow;
- ☐ an increase in inter-agency referrals;
- ☐ more opportunities for smaller agencies to tap into the expertise, resources and facilities of major organisations;
- ☐ the sharing of experiences, knowledge and ideas;
- ☐ promotion of advocacy in terms of speaking on behalf of unemployed adults;
- ☐ a catalyst for change in the delivery of services.

SURVEY OF EMPLOYERS

Methodology

79. With MSC's emphasis on greater collaboration between education and industry, it seemed appropriate to include a survey of local employers. Questionnaires were designed to elicit details of existing employment and training practices, and possible future employment and training needs, together with details of access to information and advice on training. A section was included which, it was hoped, would provide guidelines for agencies designing courses for unemployed adults.

80. Liaising with employers proved time-consuming and the project workers felt that the return on effort was disappointingly low: only 20 of the 45 employers contacted completed the questionnaire. However, contact with other projects suggests that the response rate was, in fact, relatively high. Indeed, the comments of certain non-responders indicate that more would have offered assistance, but were restrained by business pressures.

81. Interestingly, two respondents commented that they felt morally bound to offer assistance to educational establishments since many of their employees benefited from their services. One respondent stated that local industry should introduce positive discrimination in recruiting from the ranks of the unemployed:

> *'We have a moral obligation as a small local benevolent industry to attempt to employ suitable unemployed adults.'*

82. The questionnaire responses showed that employers varied considerably in their attitudes towards training. Larger firms were more likely to have management with an enthusiasm for training; two had their own training schools. With smaller employers, training provision was more a matter of feasibility than of principle. Several employers stated that they were unable to anticipate future vacancies or predict potential growth areas. The difficulty of identifying training needs was stressed in several replies.

> *'In the present economic climate our planning is short-term; we train as and when the need arises.'*

83. Educationalists often argue that employers hold too narrow a view of vocational training; it is seen purely as a means of equipping people with a limited range of mechanical skills. However, the responses showed strong support for a much broader education programme in which stress is placed on the development of personal skills and attitudes rather than on specific work skills training. Employers preferred employees to acquire specific vocational skills on-the-job. One respondent added that training programmes should ensure that trainees had a broad understanding of economic and social issues. This appears to contradict the main thrust of the MSC's programme of specific job-related skills training.

84. The responses on selection provided useful clues for the unemployed and their trainers. Interviews rated very highly as selection aids, with 19 employers considering them essential. Thirteen ranked application forms as essential. Previous work references were also regarded as important, but their limitations with applicants who had changed jobs frequently, or who had little work experience, were recognised.

85. Half rated task performance profiles as useful and some said they would like to make more use of them. Others expressed uncertainty about their interpretation.

86. Personal characteristics sought by employers varied across the range of jobs, but adaptability, motivation and enthusiasm were given universally high ratings. Also highly placed were: flexibility; ability to learn and to listen to instructions; sociability; ability to work in a team; good timekeeping; pride in the job and quality consciousness. Academic qualifications, unless specific to a job, were ranked relatively low. Literacy and numeracy received moderate ratings, although the health and safety implications of illiteracy were of some concern.

87. Several employers commented that, for an unemployed person, a major factor for consideration was whether the period of unemployment had been used constructively.

88. The Government White Paper *Training for Jobs* (Cmnd 9135, HMSO, 1984) claimed the FE system was insufficiently aware of, and unresponsive to, the needs of the employer. This was a view supported by several respondents, who quoted examples:

> *'If you want a programme put on, they say: "there's the calendar – fit into that!" Not "when would you like it to run?" '*

89. One respondent commented on the difficulties of communicating with educational institutions, citing busy switchboards and the unavailability of staff to give assistance. Another respondent commented:

> *'I can't understand why the colleges are closed for two and a half months – they could be used for retraining.'*

90. Although the respondents were generally satisfied with the existing links with educational establishments, suggestions were given as to how they could be strengthened. Increased use of short exchange placements in industry would help keep the programme designers abreast of new developments and raise awareness of local employment needs. Close, regular, personal contact was essential in building up links and encouraging collaboration.

91. Employers are a vital factor in the training equation and have a role to play in advising on local employment needs and curricular design. A number of the employers contacted were interested in collaborating with educational bodies on programmes for unemployed adults. It is likely that there would be a substantially larger number of employers in the conurbation who would be prepared to offer assistance; the project survey involved only a small sample. A concerted effort to identify such employers is needed. The Careers Service, which maintains regular contact with local industry, might assist in this task. Employers can also have an input in devising assessment tests and profiles, as well as providing work placements.

3 SETTING UP AN INFORMATION, GUIDANCE & COUNSELLING NETWORK

BACKGROUND

92. There has been increasing recognition of, and response to, the need for educational guidance services for adults. This is reflected in the growth of independent guidance services and the interest shown by national bodies. Both the DES and the MSC are involved in the research and development of information and guidance services for adults. Guidance and counselling support for the unemployed has assumed a central place in the MSC's Restart programme, and the development of the TAPS network is yet another initiative planned to improve access to training information. With these in mind, the FEU project team investigated the need for a guidance network for the unemployed in Nottingham, and considered the form it should take.

CLIENT NEEDS

93. In setting up an information and guidance service, it is important to clarify exactly what the client group of unemployed adults expects from such a facility. The interview surveys, outlined in the previous chapter, pinpointed key aspects that need addressing, and these are covered. below.

Publicity and promotion

94. Since little of the existing publicity and information on local opportunities appears to be reaching unemployed adults, a radical rethinking of strategies to raise awareness of potentially helpful services is needed. Greater use should be made of the local media, in particular community radio and newsletters, public announcement slots and free papers. Existing networks of communication, such as tenants' and residents' associations, community forums, community teachers and community development workers, can be utilised to spread the message. Institutions must be prepared to undertake outreach activities, aimed specifically at publicising and promoting available opportunities, in locations where the unemployed can be contacted directly, e.g. unemployment benefit offices, DHSS, Jobcentres. Staff will need both the resources and the time to develop this vital activity and, inevitably, more effective publicity will increase demand for services which institutions must be sure they can meet.

Comprehensible information

95. To overcome general ignorance of, and misunderstandings about, the nature of provision and intended client groups, publicity material must be worded simply and free of jargon to be comprehensible and meaningful to the unemployed. The chief concerns of the clients are cost, additional expenses, times and duration of courses. These points need prominence in publicity material. Since the written word has proved an ineffective and inappropriate method of transmitting information, greater use of personal, face-to-face contact, for example through mediating persons in a counselling guise, must be employed.

Comprehensive information

96. A great deal of the information of relevance to the unemployed is scattered among various agencies. On a restricted income, the cost of travel to and from such sources of help can be prohibitive. Moreover, constant referral-on deflates motivation in following up useful leads. In offering an effective guidance service, the availability to clients of comprehensive information, with all helping agencies having ready access to a centrally located database, is essential.

Personalised service

97. Those unemployed adults suffering social isolation and alienation often perceive statutory agencies as faceless and unwelcoming. With confidence and self-esteem at a low ebb, individuals need to know that a helping agency will treat them with respect and honour confidentiality. A service offering personal contact in a relaxed, informal setting can allay misgivings and mistrust. Meeting clients in their own environment through outreach activity can achieve this.

Location

98. Financial constraints on the unemployed are reflected in an expressed preference for guidance services attached to local neighbourhood centres or locations visited regularly such as Jobcentres, the DHSS office or a shopping precinct. Since the physical appearance of facilities can signal to clients either an adequately funded mainstream service, or poorly resourced makeshift facility, care must be taken to select attractive premises to avoid reinforcing negative images and feelings.

Independent service

99. Since unemployed adults often feel suspicious, mistrustful and cynical of many established statutory organisations, prospective recipients of guidance services need to know a service exists for their benefit and not to serve some ulterior purpose. Those contacts already established by the employed and held in trust can help convince prospective clients of the independence of a service; this can be achieved by ensuring that no one participating agency in the service is dominant.

Collaboration

100. The unemployed do not form a homogenous group so each individual presents a differing set of needs for information and guidance support. As several agencies are likely to be involved in answering these needs, a collaborative development strategy is called for. Collaboration is not easily achieved, therefore a body which has influence and contact with most of the providing agencies, namely the local authority or the MSC, is in the best position to effect this.

Staffing

101. Although seeking informality, unemployed adults do expect a professionally staffed service. However, most of the workers are temporary and/or voluntary and, while dedicated and well-intentioned, are largely inexperienced and untrained. An effective guidance service should ensure that all the staff involved are suitably trained, express appropriate attitudes and are aware of the social, financial and psychological impact of unemployment on individuals. Staff from different agencies need to share their expertise and knowledge; opportunities in the form of joint training workshops must be provided to facilitate this exchange. Although not all guidance workers need to be fully trained counsellors, some basic training in counselling should be given.

Advocacy and feedback

102. Even after obtaining relevant information and advice, clients often fail to find suitable or recommended provision, or are deterred by other factors. A guidance service must be prepared to intervene on clients' behalf when provision appears lacking or needs remain unmet. This is easier to achieve when those offering guidance services and the providers of services meet regularly on both a formal and informal basis.

A CENTRAL CO-ORDINATING UNIT

103. Evidence from the surveys and initial research suggested that the most appropriate guidance service for unemployed adults in Nottingham would revolve around a central co-ordinating unit that would serve as a focal point for a city-wide network of agencies offering support to the unemployed. Ideally, the unit would be housed in attractive city-centre premises and be professionally staffed with possible secondments from the education and careers services, MSC and the Economic Development Unit.

104. The main functions of the unit would include:

- collation of information on education, training and other opportunities locally;
- dissemination of collated data to interested agencies and individuals, in particular to the educational institutions;
- co-ordination of a network of related guidance services and organisations offering support to the unemployed;
- promotion and publicity of the unit and the related network of agencies;
- promotion and organisation of events, e.g. training workshops forums, to encourage co-operation and collaboration between the network agencies;
- provision of a drop-in counselling service in conjunction with an appointment system;
- monitoring and evaluation of existing guidance provision and support for the unemployed;
- feedback to educational institutions on identified needs and gaps in provision and the encouragement of new curricula.

105. As a major provider and sponsor of adult education and training, the local authority would have most to gain from ensuring the availability of an efficient, effective guidance service for unemployed adults – possibly as part of a wider guidance service catering for all adults.

106. It was felt that the local authority should initiate and fund a central co-ordinating unit. To maintain the element of independence, the unit would be managed by a committee of interested parties. Local authority involvement would also lend the guidance service credibility and encourage long-term planning. In addition, the authority already provides a range of related services and employs various personnel such as social workers, housing officers and community workers, who have direct access to the unemployed and can serve as a link between potential clients and the unit.

107. While the initial recommendations deriving from the project focused on the establishment of a central co-ordinating unit, the prevailing economic and political realities dictated a shift in emphasis towards tightening the loose threads of the already existing embryonic network of guidance services and related organisations operating locally.

NETWORKING

Rationale

108. Many of the ideas for a central co-ordinating unit are reflected in the UDACE publication, *The Challenge of Change* (1986), which gives specific recommendations for developing adult guidance services. It also sets out a network model as a guideline for planners, which is based on the recognition that potential clients are likely to present a complex set of needs, and, therefore, a guidance service, to be comprehensive, must utilise the skills and expertise of a range of people and agencies linked together:

> *'...a service should be built on a network of agencies and professional groups.'*

Network participants

109. Three broad types of agency are identified in the UDACE report as potential participants in a network:

- ☐ Core agencies – these offer most or all of their information and guidance as a main part of their normal work.
- ☐ Specialist agencies – their purpose is primarily educational/vocational, but guidance on particular kinds of opportunity is offered.
- ☐ General agencies – those that provide a range of services including some aspects of information and guidance for a particular client group or community.

Functions of a network

110. Loosely defined, a network is a group of agencies or individuals coming together either formally or informally, primarily for the exchange of information and experience, and to evolve and work towards agreed aims and objectives. The purpose of a network should be:

(i) to offer mutual support and consultation leading to improved information flow and communication;

(ii) to facilitate information collection and dissemination, ultimately leading to improved guidance, referral and access;

(iii) to encourage advocacy on behalf of the client group as well as pressure group activities, hopefully resulting in new developments in services and provision;

(iv) to increase co-ordination and co-operation, thus avoiding wasteful duplication of effort on behalf of the clients and ensuring greater sharing of skills, expertise and resourses.

Servicing the network

111. UDACE recommended that LEAs be responsible for initiating and funding a network, and that the co-ordination and servicing be undertaken by a local guidance unit, independent of any single network partner. To be effective the network needs to be professionally staffed and sufficiently promoted to raise public awareness.

> *'A network will, therefore, require servicing by some form of central body able to maintain links and provide support to the partners... we propose the creation for each network of a small central servicing body.'*
>
> *The Challenge of Change* (p.50)

A REVIEW OF THE INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE SERVICES IN NOTTINGHAM

112. As the surveys outlined in the previous chapter showed, Nottingham is reasonably well served with guidance and counselling facilities of a general nature. There also exists a multiplicity of agencies, operating on a variety of fronts at various levels, which offer information and guidance support specifically to the unemployed. Much of the guidance work is delivered in an *ad hoc*, uncoordinated and fragmentary way, often as a subsidiary activity to an agency's main function. Many of the personnel involved are untrained, isolated and frequently voluntary. In many cases, neither the unemployed nor the agencies with which they are in contact seem fully aware of the nature and extent of local facilities. All these factors point to a need for existing guidance services to be co-ordinated by a strong central body or base.

113. Although the desirability of a comprehensive information and guidance service in Nottingham has long been recognised, the apparent excess of guidance provision has led to a certain degree of complacency. Increasingly high levels of unemployment locally and the general growth in demand for adult guidance facilities have added pressure to the need for a collaborative network of agencies. As yet, a structure for linking these agencies does not exist. In setting up an effective network some agencies will inevitably have a larger input than others; these are likely to be the core agencies identified using the classifications given in paragraph 109:

[A] Core agencies

- *Nottinghamshire Careers Service*
- *BEGIN*
- *Jobcentres*
- *FE colleges*
- *Resource Centres for the Unemployed*
- *Community Employment Unit*
- *Private and voluntary education/ training agencies*
- *Information Technology Centre*
- *Community Programmes*

[B] Specialist agencies

- *Nottingham Council for Voluntary Service*
- *Nottingham Skillcentre*
- *Nottinghamshire Women's Training Scheme*
- *Trent Polytechnic*
- *Nottingham University*
- *Open University*
- *Workers' Educational Association*
- *Co-operative Development Agency*

[C] General agencies

- *Citizens Advice Bureaux*
- *Library Service*
- *Unemployment Benefit Offices*
- *DHSS*
- *Advice/welfare rights agencies*
- *Trade Unions*
- *Employment-Economic Development Unit*
- *Radio Caroline/TXRX*

Careers Service

114. For over ten years Nottinghamshire Careers Service has offered information, guidance and counselling support to adults. Ten years ago it also ran an 'education shop' in the city centre, which was later abandoned on economic grounds. The availability of careers counselling to adults has never been widely publicised as staff resources are already stretched. The majority of adult users are self-referrals. The service operates largely on an appointment basis, although clients do drop in.

115. Statistics show that during the first half of the year approximately 1,000 adults were interviewed by careers officers. Over half of these sought information and advice on educational opportunities, 40% wanted to know about vocational training and employment and 10% asked for help with self-presentation skills. Most adult users are in the 19-30 age group, older groups being inclined to perceive the careers service as geared to young people.

116. All careers officers are allocated half a day per fortnight specifically for adult referrals. In addition, Nottinghamshire Careers Service has identified the long-term unemployed as a priority group, with, accordingly, 12 officers briefed to work with them.

117. As part of an information and guidance network, the Careers Service would have much to offer. It is organised centrally with outbases in the residential surburbs. It has already established strong links with public, private and voluntary education/training establishments. It maintains regular contact with a range of statutory and voluntary agencies, as well as local employers. It has a well-stocked, comprehensive careers library (visited by 1,350 adults between January and May 1986), which disseminates literature and materials to other agencies. Its staff can offer professional expertise and experience in careers guidance and counselling. It is also independent of any one providing agency, but has the support of the local authority.

BEGIN

118. Basic Education Guidance in Nottinghamshire (BEGIN) is a two-year local development project jointly funded by ALBSU and Nottinghamshire County Council. It is based in an annexe of an FE college and aims to provide a free information and counselling service for adult basic education within the county. BEGIN's stated objectives are:

(i) to establish a base and referral point to deal with requests for information and guidance on ABE;

(ii) to provide and facilitate the link between those adults making the enquiry and those providing the service;

(iii) to co-ordinate the service in terms of information and guidance on ABE provision throughout the authority;

(iv) to develop close links and awareness of the service among those agencies who meet adults needing help.

119. The project, staffed by one full-time leader and one part-time outreach worker, with full-time clerical support, operates office hours Monday to Friday all year round. A 24-hour answerphone service and computer facility are used. Statistics for the first year show over 300 enquiries were received and approximately three-quarters of these were from unemployed people, predominantly in the 19-30 age range. There was equal representation of the sexes. Although BEGIN has a county-wide remit, 80% of enquiries to date have come from the Nottingham conurbation, perhaps reflecting the initial concentration of effort in this area. Outreach has proved the most significant method of contact, accounting for 40% of total enquiries. Regular sessions are held in Jobcentres, community centres and a library bus and there is an occasional display in a busy shopping arcade. Most other enquiries are made over the telephone, with 14% of enquirers visiting the office.

120. The effectiveness of different publicity approaches is not easily assessed; all the usual methods have been used, including a public services announcement, regular radio slots and posters displayed on buses. A quarter of the clients are referred by contact agencies with which BEGIN maintains close links, but this aspect of the work has proved time-consuming. The extent to which BEGIN has affected ABE recruitment is reflected in the statistics which show that three-quarters of the enquiries relate directly to ABE provision, and, since BEGIN's inception, waiting lists for classes have developed. This highlights the dilemma facing local authorities, namely, that by improving publicity, demand for services is inevitably stimulated, and, in many cases, the increase in expressed need cannot be met. The figures show a high take-up rate of 72%, attributed to the need for clients to make one contact only, i.e. with BEGIN, which then arranges interviews and enrolment. Non-starters are followed up and, if necessary, re-referred. A quarter of the enquiries received by BEGIN are 'other, non-ABE related', and indicates the demand for a broader, more comprehensive service for adults.

121. Among the initiatives taken by BEGIN has been the production of *A Literacy Guide*, a widely disseminated booklet to promote awareness of ABE provision among agencies. Regular newsletters increase links between BEGIN, ABE co-ordinators and existing ABE students. In assisting ABE students to progress to other provision, BEGIN has spent much time gathering details of suitable follow-on courses; the lack of bridging courses to fill the gap between basic and more advanced classes has been noted. In terms of providing an information and guidance service, the BEGIN project has useful experience and expertise on which to draw, particularly with regard to outreach activities.

FE colleges

122. The six FE colleges in the conurbation are major providers of education and training for unemployed adults, and are key sources of general information and guidance. As the project surveys showed, largely for historical reasons there is considerable variation in the nature and extent of training provision and the counselling facilities available.

123. In the past, educational guidance and careers advice has been generally restricted to existing and prospective full-time students. Thus, adults, many of whom attend part-time and evenings, were effectively excluded. General enquiries about provision were typically referred to the administrative office or an available member of the teaching staff. In certain colleges, specialist careers staff are available with varying hours of remission given for this work, but much of the advice and counselling work is still done haphazardly, in *ad hoc* fashion, relying on heads of department and individual course tutors, with referral to the Careers Service when necessary. The facilities in terms of a base room, resource bank of materials and computer aids also vary.

124. While none of the colleges is able to offer a general information and advice service to 'outsiders', college staff have noted a general increase in demand for guidance and counselling services, in particular from infill, 21-hour and mature students. In many cases, the advice sought is of a more complex nature than that wanted by traditional students. It is anticipated that more open advertising of guidance facilities would result yet again in a demand that could not be met. In terms of the unemployed seeking assistance, the extent of likely demand is unknown since there is at present no accurate system for calculating the true number of unemployed students enrolled. Approximate totals for the six colleges, based on figures compiled for budgetary purposes, range from 550 to 1,000; that is, a sizeable proportion of the student intake.

125. Attempts are being made to improve the availability of college guidance facilities, in particular for the unemployed. One of the colleges, utilising REPLAN money, has set up an education guidance shop and activity centre in council premises in a nearby shopping centre. This initiative aimed to raise the awareness of college provision within the community and, in particular, to offer information, advice and activity programmes to the local unemployed. This has been done with varying degrees of success. Problems have arisen with expressed educational needs remaining unmet because the college is unable, or in some cases unwilling, to divert resources to subsidising courses for the unemployed; traditional self-financing courses take precedence. The extra demand for careers and educational guidance has also put stress on the existing college careers guidance service. The availability of suitable workshop accommodation has also proved a problem. Recruitment to existing provision has noticeably, but not spectacularly, increased but the take-up of specific provision has been disappointing, for reasons unknown.

Colleges liaison group

126. A major initiative set up to improve information flow, liaison and collaboration between the six colleges, to the benefit of unemployed clients, was the creation of a Colleges Liaison Group. College principals were invited to nominate representatives to attend a series of meetings with a brief to address common issues related to provision for the unemployed. To date, this *ad hoc* group has met six times in different college locations. Issues raised by the Group concerned:

- ☐ Ways of improving the colleges' image to potential unemployed users and adults in general, through, for instance, marketing.
- ☐ The problems of gathering reliable information about client needs.
- ☐ The need to collate available data on provision offered by each college and other providers.
- ☐ Ways of avoiding unnecessary duplication of provision and inter-college rivalry.
- ☐ The need to develop appropriate college support services, e.g. for counselling and childcare.
- ☐ The need to identify gaps in provision that might be bridged, through inter-college co-operation and the sharing of resources.
- ☐ The need for related staff training.
- ☐ The role of the group as a 'think tank' for curriculum change, and as a focus for collaboration.

127. Positive results to emerge from the formation of the group included:

- ☐ Publication of *A Guide to Further Education and Training for Unemployed Adults in Nottingham* for dissemination to professional and voluntary agencies, including Jobcentres, libraries and advice centres. It is hoped that the booklet will be updated regularly and funded by the LEA.
- ☐ Plans for some joint staff development activities and a submission to FEU for funding for a collaborative staff development project.

128. Although collaborative and participative, the Colleges Liaison Group lacked status and official recognition; it therefore resolved to address the issue of its future by appealing directly to senior management. The ABE County Co-ordinating Committee was taken as a possible model for development. A number of proposals aimed at improving provision for unemployed adults were also put forward for discussion. These included modularisation of courses, free bus passes for unemployed students, more childcare facilities, increased resources for guidance and counselling support.

129. In summary, the Colleges Liaison Group, although *ad hoc* and informal, achieved some positive results and was the first step towards greater collaboration.

Computer technology

130. An issue raised by the Colleges Liaison Group concerned the use of computer technology in improving inter-college communication, and as an aid in guidance work with the unemployed. Preliminary investigations showed computer technology within the colleges to be at an embryonic stage. Several existing initiatives had potential, for example all colleges had been given Communitel software, modems, subscriptions to Prestel and The Times Network Systems (TTNS), plus direct telephone lines for use with these systems.

131. TTNS provided the mechanism by which each college could access data on its courses, sites, facilities and availability of places – in other words, the database for a local directory of courses. Moreover, UCCA and the polytechnics' clearing systems use it. Alternatively, Commitel is a useful viewdata system and has already been used by one of the colleges as a database for a user-friendly guide to its courses. A directory of higher education courses in the county is already available on CESSTEL. With the development of a TAPS network, managed by the city's Economic Development Unit, the colleges will hopefully exploit their existing computer technology for guidance purposes. Computer link up with local Jobcentres has already been considered.

PILOT INITIATIVES

132. Having identified the need for a collaborative multi-agency network for the unemployed in Nottingham, several pilot initiatives were instigated by the FEU project team to pave the way for its establishment and to test the feasibility of such an approach. These initiatives included: a directory of agencies; using the media; information pack; informal agencies forum; and collaborative outreach.

Director of agencies

133. A list was compiled of all agencies in the statutory, private and voluntary sectors offering services and support to the unemployed. This was circulated to all bodies that had some involvement with the unemployed. The directory gave addresses, telephone numbers, contact names and a brief description of each agency's activities. To assess its usefulness, receiving agencies were invited to complete a questionnaire, the results of which showed almost 100% agreement on the usefulness of such a directory. Requests for further copies and updates were made as well as suggestions for a newsletter. The collation and updating of the list has now been taken on by a private training agency and the Information Technology Centre. However, the resources needed to compile, update and disseminate such a directory must be found from within the embryonic network, or a major organisation such as the LEA or MSC.

Using the media

134. A number of leads were taken up amongst the city's media outlets to publicise the existing services for the unemployed. The most fruitful proved to be the City Council's free monthly publication distributed to over 100,000 homes in the conurbation. A two-page centre spread headed 'Ideas for the Unemployed' was compiled using material supplied by agencies in the directory. The feature focused on education and training, self-employment, recreation, voluntary work and welfare rights. Initial feedback from clients and practitioners was favourable. It is hoped to continue the initiative by featuring articles on individual projects and human interest stories in future publications. The materials collected from agencies were also used by community radio, which has a phone-in facility, in a week focusing on unemployment in Nottingham.

Information pack

135. The project workers called together representatives from a wide range of organisations to form a working group with the aim of producing an information pack for the unemployed. Twelve different organisations were represented, including the MSC, Leisure Services, local media and the Council for Voluntary Service. The proposed pack was to have a glossy cover designed by the Centre for the Unemployed, an index and various coloured leaflets inserted under the headings: 'Welfare and Advice', 'Further Education and Training', 'Recreation and Leisure', 'Employment and Work Experience', 'Voluntary/Community Work' and 'Other Related Provision'. A local celebrity was to be engaged to launch the pack, with finance being sought and obtained from local employers, the Trades Council and the local authority. After much effort and time-consuming preparatory work, the group discovered, three months into the project, that an information handbook for the

unemployed had been compiled by the County Service in Mansfield and was in the process of being published. The information pack was abandoned, although the group expressed its wish to be involved with any future productions. Had an effective networking system existed, the duplication of effort might have been avoided and a more comprehensive, accurate publication have been produced.

Informal agencies forum

136. The responses from agencies contacted during the survey work convinced the project team of the continuous and growing need for more opportunities for agencies to meet, exchange information, share ideas, and work in collaboration in some sort of 'active network'. It was thus decided to institute an Informal Agencies Forum. Over fifty agencies in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors were invited to an inaugural meeting. Twenty-seven actually sent representatives and eight sent apologies, asking to be kept informed of developments. A number of proposals were put forward, some of which have been followed through. These included:

- ☐ to hold regular three-monthly meetings (two have been held to date);
- ☐ to form a small 'think tank' of representatives from the wider Forum to liaise with both local authorities regarding their responses to unemployment;
- ☐ to plan and organise a local conference combining training workshops for practitioners and an exhibition for the unemployed, the theme to be 'Nottingham Cares'.

Collaborative outreach

137. Two initiatives that evolved from the embryonic network were, collaborative outreach activities aimed at raising awareness of local facilities for the unemployed.

138. A one-off information and advice session was held in a community centre on a large housing estate where unemployment was high. Each household was leafleted with a simply-worded, eye-catching invitation to attend a free advice session and display. The event was also publicised by posters in local shops, the community newsletter and local radio. Six different kinds of organisation were represented. Although the response was disappointing – only 15 enquiries in the three hours – the degree of collaboration and enthusiasm of the participating agencies was encouraging.

139. Better results were obtained from a display in a busy central shopping arcade, which attracted much interest and elicited 25 enquiries for further information and advice. Both outreach activities highlighted the importance of face-to-face contact in conveying information, and the limitations of conventional publicity, or the printed rather than spoken word. A central location in a major thoroughfare is also important. Enquirers' comments reflected the general ignorance and misconceptions held about educational opportunities.

'I didn't know courses were free to the unemployed.'

PROPOSED NETWORK MODEL

140. In the light of the survey work undertaken and the experience gained from the pilot initiatives, the following model of a city-wide information and guidance network for unemployed adults is proposed.

141. It is recommended that a steering group/co-ordinating committee be formed of representatives from the major bodies offering information and guidance services, particularly to the unemployed; for instance, Jobcentres, colleges of further education, Careers Service and, where relevant, other educational guidance services for adults. Officers from the local authority and MSC should be included. These bodies are suggested as they have their own well-established networks and structures; they are better resourced generally than many of the smaller voluntary and private agencies and they offer some degree of permanency.

142. The first priority of the steering group should be to bring together a range of relevant and interested agencies to form a network. The steering group should be the linchpin holding the network together; directing, co-ordinating and facilitating its activities. Ideally, the network should be resourced and jointly funded by the local authority and the MSC – mainly to cover the cost of clerical and administrative support. Experience shows that servicing the network can be costly and time-consuming and requires collaborative effort.

143. The specific role of the steering group/co-ordinating committee should be to service the network by:

- ☐ facilitating information collection, dissemination and management;
- ☐ promoting and organising regular meetings in the form of forums;
- ☐ facilitating staff training for network members;
- ☐ overseeing the promotion and publicising of the network and its services.

144. In setting up a network, prime consideration must be given to ways of:

- ☐ maintaining the momentum of the group/network and contact, especially where there is short-term funding and/or a high turnover of interested members;
- ☐ making the collective voice of the group/network heard, heeded and acted upon;
- ☐ breaking down the traditional boundaries and building up trust between participating institutions and agencies;
- ☐ covering the cost of the administrative support necessary for its smooth running.

4 CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

THE PROCESS OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

145. A number of recent publications have focused on the development of appropriate and relevant curricula for unemployed adults (*Education for the Adult Unemployed: Some Responses* NIACE, 1985; *Adult Unemployment and the Curriculum: A Manual for Practitioners* FEU, 1985). These publications emphasise the importance of curriculum development comprising four cyclical and interrelated processes: needs analysis, design, delivery and evaluation. Such curriculum development ultimately determines who shall learn what, how and where, with resources being deployed according to the requirements of the curriculum as a whole.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

146. The first stage in the cycle of client-centred curriculum development is needs analysis based on data collected locally. Information gathering, by the methods outlined in Chapter 2, thus formed a major part of the project. The survey work highlighted the lack of structured mechanisms, both city-wide and within the colleges, for collecting and disseminating data related to the needs of the unemployed. Machinery for co-ordinating and collating the available information is needed.

KEY FEATURES IN PROGRAMME DESIGN AND DELIVERY

147. On the basis of the information gathered, it was possible to pinpoint key factors that should direct the design and implementation of curricula, so that they meet the expressed needs of unemployed adults. These include the following elements.

Job search and application

148. Finding paid employment is the number one priority for most unemployed adults, so programmes must offer opportunities for job hunting to continue. Help with writing CVs, application forms and letters, and with interview techniques is likely to be needed. Support in handling unsuccessful applications is often valuable. While programmes cannot provide jobs, they can meet many of the clients' implicit needs.

> *'I've had several interviews, but I don't seem able to sell myself to the employer. I get really stressed when I go to them.'*
>
> *'Applying for jobs is an expensive business – paying for postage, telephone calls, bus fares. It takes up a lot of my time.'*

Vocational guidance and counselling

149. Guidance in reassessing employment prospects, raising awareness of potential new areas of work and matching training needs to work aspirations should be incorporated into programmes. To offer effective vocational guidance, tutors will require information on local employment trends and job opportunities from a reliable central source.

'Jobs were always easy to come by – I never needed training. I haven't a clue what other sort of work I could do.'

'I've always wanted to be a PE teacher, but I've never known how to go about it and if my certificates are relevant.'

Work experience

150. Adults need opportunities for vocational sampling and practical work experience; many feel the lack of related experience to be a handicap in pursuing employment. After prolonged periods out of work, individuals can lose touch with work habits and relationships. A short period of work experience can restore confidence, increase social contact and encourage exploration of new areas of work. Close links with local employers who might offer work placements must be nurtured by course tutors.

'What's the point of training if you haven't any work experience to back it up?'

'It's OK getting a qualification but unless you've got some real work experience, employers won't look at you.'

'I've always been a plumber. How do I know if I could do anything else?'

Vocational training

151. Most unemployed adults seek skills-orientated, practically based courses that satisfy vocational objectives. Greater use of infill to traditional vocational courses is one answer, given adequate tutorial back-up. Alternatively, more 21-hour skills-based courses must be developed.

'I'd like to have a marketable skill.'

Progression

152. Unemployed adults will take up education and/or training if it is seen as a stepping-stone to further learning opportunities or employment. It is crucial that the time lapse between finishing one programme and starting another is kept to a minimum to maintain motivation. Increased collaboration between providers should ensure a smooth progression. Increased use of credit transfer and modularisation of courses can help.

'I'd happily go on a course if I felt it would lead somewhere.'

'It would be worth doing if it opened other doors.'

'I don't want a course just for the sake of occupying time.'

Certification

153. Many unemployed adults are looking for academic credentials as well as certificates validating their existing work-related skills. The strong desire for qualifications and certificates leads many to enrol for courses inappropriate to their needs and abilities.

'I've been doing shop work for years, but now the employer expects you to have a qualification to prove you can do it!'

'Being unemployed as long as I have, I realise qualifications are more acceptable than ten years experience.'

154. Programmes that offer accreditation of competences prove most attractive. More innovative use could be made of existing national and local assessment schemes. College-based skills profiles relevant to a wide range of abilities can be developed. Any such assessments must be understood by participants and employers alike, who should be consulted in their design.

Educational guidance and counselling

155. Access to ongoing educational guidance and counselling can help clients benefit from provision appropriate to their aptitudes, abilities and needs. It can avoid the disillusion that occurs when courses fail to match expectations; timely advice can facilitate participation and help clients clarify their learning needs and objectives. Since, for many, unemployment is a recurring event, strategies for offering continued post-course support are needed.

'I went on a course – it didn't get me anywhere so I went back to see the tutor for advice on further training. He really didn't want to know – too busy with the next lot of trainees.'

Personal counselling

156. Besides financial worries, unemployment brings a host of personal problems and feelings that many find hard to handle. Although individuals react differently to enforced unemployment, most experience various changes of mood including shock, anger and despair. Unemployment can create family tensions, anxiety, depression and lethargy. Individuals may have difficulty coping with negative social attitudes and become defensive or oversensitive to criticism. The lack of personal privacy and financial independence also lowers self-esteem. The unemployed will bring these feelings and attitudes to the learning situation, so they need to be worked through and understood by tutors. Opportunities for personal counselling on an individual or group basis must be incorporated into programmes.

'I have moments of deep depression and despair.'

'I didn't tell anyone I'd been made redundant – I felt too ashamed.'

'I hate sponging off my wife – I don't want to be a parasite.'

'Unemployment mucks up personal relationships because other people don't understand how you feel.'

Mutual support

157. Unemployment can be isolating and divisive. Unemployed adults need social reintegration and mutual support groups to offer opportunities for sharing experiences.

'Meeting other people in the same boat can sometimes help.'

'If you're all unemployed, you're not embarassed and you've got a common experience to share.'

Confidence building

158. The unemployed have an overriding need for a restoration of self-esteem and confidence. Help in identifying existing skills and expertise and in acknowledging uncredited learning experiences can provide a positive boost to morale. Helping adults to assume responsibility for achieving realistic goals through a negotiated learning agenda is an important element in the process of confidence raising.

'I can feel the lethargy creeping in. I need someone to give me a kick – force me to do something.'

'I'm in a rut – I've stopped trying. It's difficult being positive when you've hit rock bottom.'

Negotiation

159. As the contradictions in the quotations above show, the unemployed are not a homogenous group; they come from varying backgrounds, have different educational experiences and aspirations and express various learning preferences. An individual approach based on a negotiated learning agenda is called for, therefore the content and delivery of programmes must be sufficiently flexible to suit each individual's preferred mode of learning.

'I prefer a formal situation, where the learning is structured. It's what I'm used to.'

'With this drop-in business, I don't think people take learning seriously.'

'I like to work at my own speed without someone breathing over my shoulder. Informal and relaxed!'

Barriers to access

160. In designing appropriate and relevant programmes, account must be taken of the barriers that can effectively limit participation and impede access to potentially useful provision. These barriers are well-documented and researched (ACACE, 1982; Bryant, 1982; Charnley, McGivney, Sims, 1985), and can be both real and perceived. Briefly, they include:

- ☐ real or assumed costs of tuition, materials, etc.
- ☐ lack of knowledge and understanding about existing provision
- ☐ lack of information about concessions, DHSS regulations, grants, etc.
- ☐ the cost of travelling
- ☐ the cost of child-minding facilities where they exist
- ☐ restrictions on the unemployed individual's time
- ☐ inflexible start and finish dates of courses
- ☐ misconceptions about further education and training
- ☐ lack of formal qualifications to meet course entry requirements
- ☐ imposed age restrictions for entry to courses
- ☐ lack of facilities, ethos and atmosphere congenial to adults, plus necessary support services
- ☐ use of negative 'labelling' and 'ghetto' provision.

PROVISION AT BASFORD HALL COLLEGE

161. The general principles underlying provision at the College are Restart, adult preparation training (APT) and directly funded courses.

162. The primary aim of the *Restart* programme for the long-term unemployed is to produce a proactive approach to life and the search for work. It aims to offer an 'action' learning experience with the emphasis on remotivating participants. As a national initiative sponsored by the MSC, the programme presents a prescribed package of practical advice and guidance on job-search, interview techniques, self-analysis, assessment of employment potential, raising awareness of educational opportunities and general personal support and welfare rights.

163. *Adult preparation training* aims to:

- ☐ provide a wide range of open-ended training provision, from which participants can 'pick and mix' according to individual needs and aspirations;
- ☐ provide guidance and counselling to assist clients in recognising their potential;
- ☐ provide opportunities for job sampling over a range of industrial contexts;
- ☐ develop skills in job-seeking and acquisition;
- ☐ provide clients with an understanding of available education and training opportunities;
- ☐ equip clients with sufficient basic skills to enhance employ-ability.

164. The key features of the programme are that personal learning packages are negotiatable, competence-based and experiential. Each participant is allowed a maximum of 30 days or 180 hours of training and no formal qualifications or experience are needed to join. APT is modular in structure to allow sufficient flexibility for 'roll-on, roll-off' attendance. The modules offered are those identified as being most likely to satisfy the greatest demand as expressed by the clients. To allow even greater flexibility and choice, APT has revolved, since September 1986, around four broad-based, multi-skills workshops: Business Studies, Community Care, Mechanical Skills and Construction.

165. Ongoing counselling and guidance is considered an integral part of the programme, with all participants expected to opt for one of three guidance sessions held weekly, in which advice on job-search, interview techniques, letter writing, CVs and further training opportunities is given. Tutors are timetabled to offer immediate assistance if required throughout the week.

166. From the experience of running the APT programme, the following observations can be made:

- ☐ There is a strong case for providing a flexible learning environment in which special provision complements existing traditional, job-related training, and transfer between the two should be facilitated.
- ☐ Integrated guidance and counselling is central to fostering a client-centred approach. Inevitably, vocational and educational guidance will overlap with personal counselling, requiring staff with expertise in both areas.
- ☐ Basic core skills are best tackled in a vocationally related, practical context, i.e. an integrated curriculum.
- ☐ Word of mouth and personal recommendation are among the most effective means of recruitment and promotion of provision.
- ☐ There is a need to develop suitable evaluative and monitoring mechanisms to assess client satisfaction and the effectiveness of provision. Unemployed clients will need to be involved in steering groups and on advisory committees.
- ☐ Structured follow-up of clients and efficient record keeping are vital.
- ☐ The institution should reflect an environment and ethos supportive of adults. Facilities for coffee making, separate common rooms or a recognised base, childcare provision and simplified enrolment procedures will be required.
- ☐ As heavy demands are likely to be made on staff in terms of coping with counselling situations and participatory, workshop-based learning, a structured programme of staff development and training is a prerequisite for setting up provision.

167. *Directly funded provision*: these courses are specifically designed to attract the unemployed and fulfil certain criteria:

- ☐ they comply with DHSS regulations relating to the 21-hour rule, thus allowing participants to continue claiming state benefits;
- ☐ they allow part-time attendance and thus the opportunity to pursue other commitments;
- ☐ they are free (on production of a UB40);
- ☐ they are advertised as being suitable for adults;
- ☐ they are advertised as being of interest to the unemployed as well as the employed and self-employed, thus avoiding negative labelling and suggestions of 'ghetto' provision;
- ☐ they offer discretionary entry dependent upon a 'friendly informal chat' with the course tutor, i.e. no formal qualifications are required;
- ☐ they offer a chance to acquire certification of prior skills and competences and previous uncredited learning;
- ☐ they are practical, workshop-based, with materials supplied at no or subsidised cost;
- ☐ they offer flexible learning programmes that are negotiable and tailored to suit individual needs and aspirations;
- ☐ they offer training linked to vocational needs, e.g. 'Plumbing – A Job with a Future', 'Machine Woodworking for Work or Leisure', 'Introduction to Technician Careers for Women';
- ☐ they offer opportunities to gain new skills and/or brush up existing skills;
- ☐ they offer the opportunity to gain professional advice and guidance on educational and vocational opportunities.

Specific developments

168. Specific initiatives have been developed at Basford Hall College that have significantly influenced the design, implementation and direction of provision for the adult unemployed. Details of some of these are given below.

A college policy

169. A key factor influencing the direction and implementation of provision for the unemployed has been the formulation and adoption of a college policy that clearly underlines a responsibility and commitment to serve the needs of all sections of the community. Its four main aims are:

(i) to identify the requirements for education, training and personal development of clients and client groups in the over-16 age group, and to provide an appropriate range of services to meet these requirements;

(ii) to organise college resources so that education, training and personal development programmes can be provided on an efficient, effective, flexible and responsive basis;

(iii) to provide equality of access and opportunity for all members of the community, and to treat all individuals and client groups equally;

(iv) to respond rapidly and sensitively to changes in demand for education, training and personal development made by industry, commerce, the public sector, the community, other agencies and individuals.

170. More specifically, the College has accepted the need to make a long-term commitment to providing high quality, flexible programmes for the unemployed. It is also pursuing strategies to enable the unemployed to participate fully in all the provision that the College offers. In other words:

> *'...being sensitive to the needs of unemployed people for flexible programmes of education, training and retraining.'*
> *(Basford Hall College Policy 1985)*

Organisational change

171. The setting up of a *Central Programmes Unit (CPU)* has had a significant impact on the development of provision within the College. The major strengths of the CPU are that it operates on a cross-departmental basis, and its staff of seven work an extended college year.

172. The CPU's initial brief was to ensure that the College was responding flexibly and speedily to the needs of industry and the community in general. The Unit was charged specifically with overseeing the development of funded programmes to augment departmental work and with encouraging greater inter-departmental provision. Since its inception the brief has widened to include:

- ☐ developing and co-ordinating funded provision across the College, including YTS, TOPS, adult unemployment initiatives and full-cost provision
- ☐ acting as a market intelligence unit;
- ☐ promoting productive industrial and community liaison;
- ☐ providing cost-effective consultancy services;
- ☐ developing and delivering open learning in response to industry's needs;
- ☐ developing and delivering specific 'positive action' programmes in response to community needs;
- ☐ developing and delivering initiatives for the unemployed and co-ordinating the activities of the College in relation to the needs of the unemployed;
- ☐ providing a dynamic framework within which the College can make rapid responses to emerging needs.

173. Future plans include the setting aside of a pool of money to enable the CPU to pursue short-term positive action programmes for those with special needs or interests, for instance women returners, the over-50s, self-help groups and co-operatives and those with disabilities. The needs would be identified via outreach activity (see paragraphs 177-179).

Guidance and support

174. Guidance is a permanent, not an occasional, service. Trained staff are available at all times in a reception office. In addition on-course (formative) guidance is ensured by systematic visits by guidance staff to monitor progress, raise awareness of opportunities for futher progression and obtain feedback to contribute to curriculum review and development.

175. A special guidance initiative set up by the project workers consisted of a series of three-hour support sessions for APT trainees. The rationale behind this development lay in the observ ed of many trainees for opportunities to reflect on their current li situations and the view that those who adopt a proactive stance towards unemployment have a better chance of achieving success in the long term. The sessions were planned to assist participants in becoming more proactive. (See Watts and Knasel, 1985, p.5, which outlines five possible objectives which educational provision for the adult unemployed might pursue.)

176. The tutors' role was seen as facilitative in exploring tasks that aimed to help participants to:

- ☐ build their confidence and self-esteem;
- ☐ reassess their personal strengths, weaknesses and skills;
- ☐ assess their employment potential;
- ☐ improve their job-search skills and be aware of local employment opportunities;
- ☐ develop and define life goals and design action plans to achieve these;
- ☐ have an understanding of local facilities and support services for the unemployed;
- ☐ produce a personal profile or curriculum vitae;
- ☐ practice interview techniques, letters of application and filling in forms;
- ☐ participate in a variety of active learning and other appropriate techniques to promote proactivity, i.e. simulation, role-play, case-study;
- ☐ maintain contact where possible with tutors and other group members.

Outreach strategies

177. In line with stated policy, the College has adopted a more outward-looking approach in terms of closer liaison and involvement with the local community. Thus, the CPU is seeking, within the guidance and counselling framework, to establish regular direct contact with the unemployed and those agencies with which they are most associated.

178. Outreach is seen as fulfilling three vital functions:

(i) *Identification of needs* – It provides a means of identifying emerging community and social needs, to which the College seeks to respond through positive action programmes. This may involve initiating, resourcing and supporting locally based provision, as outlined in *Continuing Education: Local Learning Centres* (ACACE, 1983). It can also include greater collaboration with voluntary organisations, resource centres and self-help groups, all endeavouring to organise activities for the unemployed.

(ii) *Publicity and awareness raising* – Outreach is one of the most fruitful ways of stimulating interest in educational opportunities, giving information and recruiting clients. Maximum use is made of mobile displays, exhibitions in key locations, doorstep canvassing and media coverage. A regular presence at key contact points, e.g. DHSS, unemployment benefit offices and Jobcentres, is maintained. Potential referral agencies are also kept regularly informed of activities and new developments.

(iii) *Bridging the gap* – It is the College's responsibility to bridge the gap between the community and the institution, and to encourage a view of the institution as a local resource. Outreach serves as a bridge and a means of breaking down the contact barriers. As the unemployed are often hesitant about approaching an educational institution, then the College must take its services to the clients. Maximum use is made of existing informal networks of communications, e.g. tenants' associations, clubs, community teachers, local community forums.

179. Successful outreach depends on a willingness to collaborate, enter into consultation and share resources and expertise with other agencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

180. In the light of the project's findings and experiences, the following recommendations are offered as guidelines to other prospective providers in colleges of further education:

- ☐ That the college formulates a policy underlining a commitment to equality of access to learning opportunities for all members of the community, including the unemployed, and that this serves as a framework against which priorities can be identified and resources allocated.
- ☐ That the college appoints a member(s) of staff responsible for the co-ordination, development and monitoring of provision for the unemployed, both MSC- and Lea-funded, on a college-wide basis.
- ☐
  - That the college establishes a base to serve as a focal point for existing and prospective unemployed clients seeking assistance and guidance on educational and other related provision, both within and outside the college.
  - That the base serves as a support facility for both unemployed clients and college tutors, and that it is staffed by experienced and trained guidance workers/counsellors.
  - That base staff are responsible for maintaining an information resource bank for offering guidance and counselling support to clients and for feeding back information on client needs to the co-ordinator.
- ☐ That the college allocates sufficient hours for a member(s) of staff to assume an outreach role to promote closer links with community agencies, to foster collaborative ventures and to undertake market research among the client group.
- ☐ That the college supports a programme of related staff developments aimed at:
  - teaching staff;
  - support staff, identified as having contact with unemployed adults;
  - course planners.
- ☐ That, in designing programmes for unemployed adults, planners consult and involve representatives of the client group and the agencies with which they are closely associated via steering committees and advisory boards.

5 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

181. Any new developments in the design and implementation of programmes for unemployed adults will necessitate a corresponding review of the skills, expertise and attitudes of associated staff, to ensure that they are adequately equipped to meet changing curricular requirements, and can effectively carry out tasks expected of them. With appropriate training, all staff can assume a proactive role in the curriculum development process.

IDENTIFYING LOCAL TRAINING NEEDS

182. The essence of curriculum-led staff development is that the staff most closely involved with the work ultimately determine the direction of training programmes according to evolving needs. Adopting this bottom-up model, the project team, through questionnaires, interviews and checklists, sought to elicit missing staff competences and knowledge relating to the development of provision for unemployed adults.

183. Responses from the 30 departments within the six local FE colleges showed that at least one-third could identify staff in regular contact with unemployed adults. These staff were usually part-time as specific provision for the unemployed, often MSC-sponsored, necessitated flexible, short-term staffing arrangements and much of the mainstream provision used by the unemployed, such as Adult Basic Education and evening classes, was traditionally staffed this way. Few staff involved had had the opportunity to review, assess and develop their skills and knowledge with respect to working with the unemployed. Areas specified by heads of department for development within staff training programmes included, in order of frequency mentioned: developing liaison and outreach activities for the unemployed, guidance and counselling, the organisation and funding of appropriate courses, identifying learning needs of the unemployed, negotiating individual learning packages, coping with multi-skills and mixed-level teaching, designing appropriate resource materials, and assessment and profiling of adults.

CONTINUUM OF NEEDS

184. Staff development needs can be placed along a continuum, with the amount and type of training required by individual staff depending on the roles expected of each and previous experiences and knowledge. In designing appropriate staff training to facilitate the development of curricula for unemployed adults there are two main considerations – the range of staff to be involved (i.e. teaching staff, senior management, support and ancillary personnel) and the range of content areas. These require matching. The following attitudes, knowledge and competences were identified as of relevance to staff.

Attitudes displaying:

- ☐ supportiveness
- ☐ respect of adult learner, purposes and needs
- ☐ positiveness
- ☐ flexibility
- ☐ sensitivity

Knowledge of:

- ☐ networking, referral and support agencies
- ☐ regulations and funding arrangements
- ☐ alternative learning opportunities
- ☐ curricular needs of the unemployed
- ☐ sources of information on local and national employment trends, local training needs, etc.
- ☐ methods of market research, publicity and community liaison
- ☐ a range of teaching methodologies appropriate to adult learning
- ☐ basic theories and techniques of counselling
- ☐ nature of unemployment and its effects on the individual
- ☐ a wide range of assessment methods, including profiling, competence-based testing, certification of skills
- ☐ curricular processes and flexible learning methods
- ☐ differing objectives of programmes
- ☐ process and psychology of adult learning

Competences in:

- ☐ teaching for transferable skills
- ☐ interviewing, guidance and counselling
- ☐ small group management
- ☐ diagnosing learners' needs
- ☐ negotiating individualised learning programmes
- ☐ evaluating and accrediting adult learning
- ☐ interpersonal communication
- ☐ a range of teaching methods and styles appropriate to adults, e.g. experiential, open learning, simulation multi-skills teaching
- ☐ mixed-ability, mixed-level teaching
- ☐ designing appropriate materials

AIMS OF A TRAINING PROGRAMME

185. A modular structure with content organised into general and specialist areas should ensure the most efficient, cost-effective matching of training provision with individual needs, and facilitate the selection of training processes best suited to meeting those differing learning needs.

186. Since attitudinal change, i.e. the adoption of a sympathetic approach, is a prerequisite for providing the proper context for the acquisition of knowledge and the development of competences from the application and testing of that knowledge, all staff should be exposed to general content areas which focus on:

- ☐ examining individual attitudes to unemployment and the unemployed
- ☐ raising awareness of the psychological and social impact of unemployment on individuals and families
- ☐ examining individual attitudes to unemployment and the unemployed
- ☐ raising awareness of the psychological and social impact of unemployment on individuals and families
- ☐ examining the origins of unemployment and a factual analysis of employment trends

187. Certain staff would require specific modules focusing on:

- ☐ the educational needs of the unemployed
- ☐ developing counselling skills and techniques
- ☐ teaching approaches and methodologies for use with adults
- ☐ designing resource materials
- ☐ assessment, accreditation and competence testing
- ☐ developing awareness of local networks, referral systems
- ☐ knowledge of regulations, concessions, welfare rights

TEACHING STAFF

188. Six key aspects were identified as warranting special attention in terms of developing the skills and knowledge of teaching staff:

- ☐ Tutors lacking experience in teaching adults may need to adjust their attitudes, teaching style and approaches to suit adult needs, i.e. the adoption of a facilitatory role, whereby tutors and clients are equal partners and the skills and experience that unemployed adults bring to the learning situation are respected.
- ☐ Assisting unemployed adults to assume responsibility for their own learning and to determine their learning needs is an important function of the tutor. Negotiating individual learning agendas and steering clients towards realistic goals requires tact, sensitivity and skill.
- ☐ Guidance and counselling assumes a central place in work with unemployed adults. Coping with the demands of counselling situations requires a knowledge or experience in basic counselling techniques, and an insight into the nature of unemployment and its impact on individuals. To offer effective assistance and advice, tutors need to know about relevant information sources, referral agencies, local employment trends and existing support networks.
- ☐ A knowledge of, and competence in, applying appropriate teaching methodologies to suit adult learning needs are essential. The use of mixed-ability, multi-skills workshops and an emphasis on active, experiential learning require a more imaginative repertoire from the tutor.
- ☐ New forms of assessment and accreditation of learning that are relevant to adults need developing. Tutors should be able to devise and use competence-based profiles.
- ☐ Close contact and liaison with outside bodies and individuals, e.g. DHSS, Jobcentre, employers, must be fostered by tutors to aid publicity, recruitment and work placements. Few tutors have experience of this nature and assistance may be needed.

SUPPORT STAFF

189. Staff development activities should aim to include all college staff including librarians, receptionists, technicians, administrative and other ancillary workers. Each has an equal role to play in creating a welcoming, supportive environment conducive to unemployed adult learners, and in improving their access to learning opportunities. All staff need familiarising with new developments and their underlying rationale, and they can contribute in a practical way to the planning and execution of programmes.

190. The first point of contact for initial enquirers is generally office or reception staff. An efficient, sensitive and sympathetic approach can encourage individuals who are unfamiliar with enrolment procedures, ignorant of regulations, or generally apprehensive about their learning ability. A sound training in listening and information-giving skills, a knowledge of referral networks, concessions and regulations can ease this initial process. Practical assistance in the form of ensuring the smooth payment of training allowances and the provision of appropriate documentation for outside agencies can be given.

191. With the emphasis on open access, experiential and project-based learning, the expertise of technical staff can be utilised in devising new forms of client assessment, in preparing and maintaining resource materials and in organising multi-skills workshops. Ancillary staff involved with childcare provision, catering and caretaking can ensure access to opportunities on an all-year-round basis, if involved in the early stages of planning programmes.

PILOT STAFF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Nottinghamshire REPLAN Staff Development Group, training workshop

192. The FEU project team helped to form a county REPLAN staff development group, comprising staff from the Careers Service, FE colleges, a local voluntary counselling agency and a community employment scheme. The group was initiated with the aim of planning and organising an experimental one-day joint training workshop intended to draw together staff from a wide range of local agencies associated with unemployed adults. The workshop was free and a lunch and travelling expenses were provided to encourage maximum participation from the voluntary sector. East Midlands Further Education Council assisted with the administration and provided the accommodation for the event. Publicity material and application forms were sent to over 50 agencies; of these 32 sent participants.

193. The major focus of the day was on the identification of (a) knowledge and skills required by staff to enable them to offer guidance and counselling to the unemployed, and (b) possible future training needs. Other stated objectives were:

- ☐ to encourage the development of a supportive network of people working with unemployed adults;
- ☐ to facilitate an exchange of information, experience and skills;
- ☐ to identify local resources and expertise on which participants could draw so as to increase the effectiveness of their efforts.

194. In planning the day's programme, the group aimed to include as many participatory activities as possible and opted for a workshop approach employing various methodologies:

- ☐ a keynote talk on unemployment and its effect on the individual, family and community;
- ☐ a factual, statistical analysis of unemployment trends;

- ☐ a 'frame' presentation of an unemployed person in a counselling situation and within the family by Nottinghamshire drama specialists;
- ☐ small group brainstorming to identify problems closely associated with unemployment;
- ☐ role play activity (observation/participation) to heighten awareness of the experience of unemployment and the role of the counsellor;
- ☐ case studies to identify aspects of good counselling practice;
- ☐ a short exposition on basic counselling techniques by a trained counsellor;
- ☐ opportunities for information exchange, making contacts, swopping publicity literature and materials;
- ☐ plenary session to evaluate the day and identify future needs.

195. All participants completed information cards giving details of their agency's work with contact names; these were later collated and disseminated. Evaluation sheets completed by half the participants showed the most useful parts of the day's programme to be the role-play activities and the opportunities for information exchange. Several participants felt that certain key issues had only been touched on and needed further exploration in future workshops. Frequent reference was made to the isolation felt by many workers in the field and the value of supportive networks.

196. Although the day's activities were, by and large, successful in achieving the set objectives, certain reservations were expressed. First, the REPLAN development group had given time and effort on a goodwill basis, extraneous to normal duties. Secondly, five planning meetings were held within a three-month period and this was felt to be inadequate. Thirdly, the limitations on workshop places meant that many agencies based outside the conurbation had to be excluded. Without guaranteed funding further workshops could not be organised; this raised the question of who should fund a collaborative, multi-agency initiative – an issue still to be resolved.

In-house staff development

197. A number of development activities relating to provision for unemployed adults were organised through Basford Hall College's centralised staff development support facility. These included:

- ☐ A one day preliminary workshop, forming part of a residential staff training weekend, and aiming to focus attention on issues arising from the College's response to the Adult Training Strategy (ATS). A checklist (Appendix IV) was used to identify areas of concern relating to the development of new curricula, principally APT and open learning, and future training needs. The workshop highlighted shortcomings in many people's awareness of the implications of ATS. Outcomes included suggestions for a college 'experiential assessment' policy relating to course entry; the desirability of a common college timetable and increased modularisation of courses to ensure greater flexibility; a consideration of collaborative modules with industry and the appointment of a college industrial liaison officer. A number of follow-up staff development activities were initiated on the basis of this workshop.
- ☐ Two one-week counselling training courses, modular in structure and open to both teaching and support staff working with the unemployed. Using the transactional analysis model of communication, the initial module focused on developing self-awareness, and the second on basic counselling techniques and interviewing skills. Further counselling training has since been undertaken by the participants.

- ☐ 'Adult unemployment and the curriculum' awareness-raising workshop as part of a one-day college event. The activity-based workshop, aiming to increase sensitivity and better understanding of needs, was split into two sessions:
  - ■ 'Unemployment and the individual'

    Being unemployed – what it means, an examination of prejudices and attitudes, identification of pressures and problems.

    Case-studies of individuals.

    Factual analysis of local employment trends.
  - ■ 'FE's response'

    The educational needs of the unemployed (using project findings).

    Case-studies of existing good practice

    Study of the Watts and Knasel checklist – identifying gaps, needs, issues within the College.

    Materials used included video, newspaper cuttings, the Watts and Knasel checklist, summary of project findings, task sheets, statistical data.

    Methodology – case-studies, brainstorming, group discussion, individual tasks.
- ☐ There are plans to include a session on 'Provision for the Unemployed' within the City and Guilds 730 Teachers' Certificate course run at the College. It is hoped to extend this session to all adult education tutors, chiefly to increase their awareness of the College's counselling service and alternative provision.

Collaborative staff development

198. The introduction of the Restart programme has underlined the need for greater collaboration between colleges and other agencies, not only in terms of information exchange, but also in relation to staff development. The initial project surveys identified a variety of agencies both willing and able to offer training support to college staff, particularly in the areas of welfare rights, core counselling skills and identification of needs. Colleges needs to utilise this expertise and be prepared to bring in outsiders to assist with staff development.

APPENDICES

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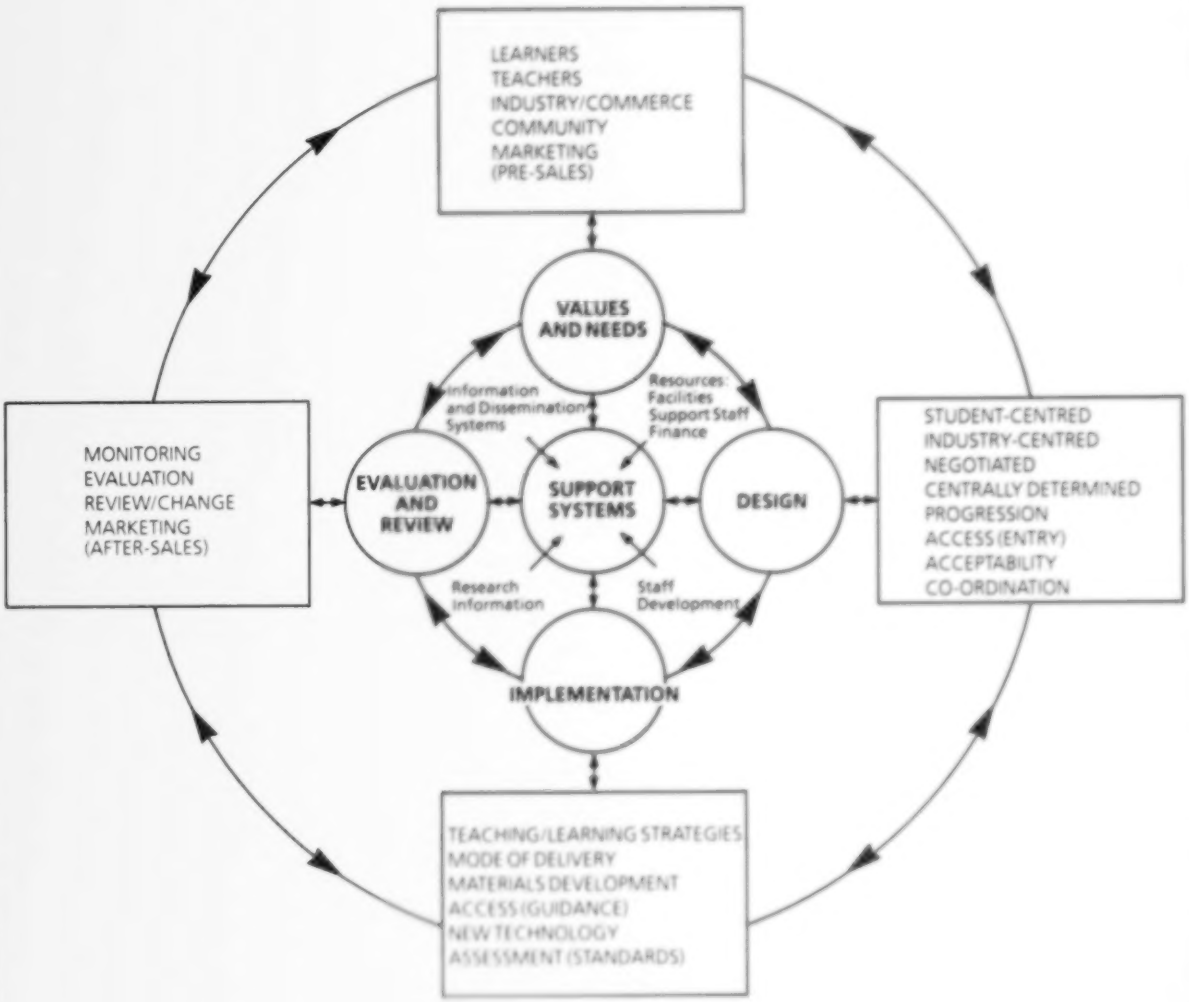

INNER CIRCLE AND HUB –	OUTER CIRCLE –
The curriculum development cycle	Features of each stage in the cycle

Guided interview schedule for use with the adult unemployed questionnaire

The interview should be conducted in a conversational style.
The interviewer should use his/her discretion as to the appropriate nature and depth of probing.

PERSONAL DETAILS

- *Note sex*
- *How old are you?*
- *Are you single? married? divorced? widowed?*
- *Do you have any dependent children living with you? How many?*
- *What are their ages?*
- *Ascertain ethnic origin.*

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INTERESTS

- *How old were you when you left school?*
- *Did you leave school with any qualifications or certificates?*
- *Can you tell me what these were?*
- *Have you done any studying or training since leaving school? (Probe)*
- *What have you done? Was it full-time, part-time, evening, day-release, by correspondence?*
- *What was your reason for doing it? Did you get a certificate or qualification?*
- *Have you ever been to any adult education classes?*
- *Do you have any interests or hobbies?*
- *Do you belong to any clubs or societies?*
- *Are you involved in any kind of community or voluntary work?*
- *Have you served an apprenticeship? Did you complete it?*
- *Have you been on a Government-sponsored scheme, such as YTS or Community Programme?*

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

- *Have you ever had regular employment? Have you had regular employment in the last five years?*
- *How long have you currently been unemployed?*
- *Have you been unemployed before? How many times in the past five years?*
- *Would you describe the kind of work you've usually done as skilled? unskilled? supervisory? managerial? professional?*
- *Approximately how many jobs have you had in the past five years?*
- *What was your last job? Why did you leave?*
- *Can you give me some details about other jobs you've had in recent years, how long had you had them and your reasons for leaving? (Probe)*
- *(Using prompt card A) Can you tell me if you think any of the statements on this card relate to your present unemployment?*

ASPIRATIONS

- *Are you actively looking for work at the present time?*
- *How are you going about this?*
- *(Women only) Are you wishing to return to work after a period at home?*
- *How long has it been since you last worked?*
- *Are you mainly looking for work you've done before?*
- *Are you considering other alternatives?*
- *What are they? (Probe).*
- *Have you applied for any jobs recently?*
- *What have you applied for?*
- *Have you had any interviews? (Probe)*
- *Would you be prepared to take up some form of retraining/training?*
- *Have you thought about what kind of training you would like (to do)? (Probe)*
- *Are there any particular skills you would like to develop or acquire?*
- *What would you say you can offer a prospective employer?*

INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

- ☐ *Have you considered taking up further education or training since becoming unemployed?*
- ☐ *Do you see it as relevant to your present situation?*
- ☐ *Have you at any time sought information, advice or guidance about education, training or job prospects? (Probe)*
- ☐ *Who have you spoken to or approached?*
- ☐ *Were you satisfied with the information or help given?*
- ☐ *Was it useful? relevant? up-to-date? (Note any comments.)*
- ☐ *Have you ever wanted or tried to join a course but were unsuccessful for some reason, maybe because of age, insufficient qualifications or it being the wrong time of year to join?*
- ☐ *(Using prompt card B) Can you tell me which of these you know something about?*
- ☐ *(Using prompt card C) Here's a list of reasons people often give to explain why they don't take up courses. Do you feel any of these apply to you? Do you personally feel a need for more information and guidance about education and training opportunities? (Probe)*
- ☐ *In some parts of the country information and guidance services are available to adults who want to know more about education and training opportunities. If such a service were to be made available in Nottingham, where would you like it to be based?*
- ☐ *What kind of service would you like to see it offer?*
- ☐ *Who do you think should staff it? What kind of a place would you like it to be? (Probe)*
- ☐ *Note any other comments.*

COMMENTS ON COURSES

- ☐ *We want to design courses that would interest and be of benefit to unemployed adults like yourself, and we would like to hear your comments as to the kind of course that might suit your needs and interests. (Probe)*
- ☐ *For example, in what kind of surroundings would you feel most comfortable?*
- ☐ *Would you be happy to mix with all age groups?*
- ☐ *Do you have any preference as to the time of courses? the location? intensity? duration? style of teaching/learning?*
- ☐ *How far would you be prepared to travel to a course?*
- ☐ *Would you prefer a course specifically for unemployed people or one open to anyone who wished to join?*
- ☐ *What would make a course of education or training worthwhile for you?*
- ☐ *What would be your main reason for going on a course?*
- ☐ *(Using prompt card D) Here is a list of different types of courses. Would you be interested in any of these?*
- ☐ *Is there any type of course on a subject that you would like to add to this list?*
- ☐ *Do you have any further comments to make about anything we have discussed in this interview?*

- ☐ *Thank you for taking part.*
  If we needed further help, would you be prepared to talk to us again?

  (Take name and address or area of Nottingham.)

STAFF DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

Working with the Adult Unemployed

Please tick the appropriate boxes numbered 1-5 to indicate the degree of importance to you of each aspect in terms of your staff development needs. Specify other needs in the space provided.

	OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE 1	2	3	VERY IMPORTANT 4	5	REMARKS
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT						
IDENTIFYING NEEDS						
MODULARISATION						
CORE CONTENT INTEGRATION						
OFF-SITE PROVISION						
SELF-ASSESSMENT						
DETERMINING OBJECTIVES						
TEACHING						
MIXED-ABILITY/MIXED-LEVEL						
LEARNING BY DOING						
MULTI-SKILLS WORKSHOPS						
GROUP MANAGEMENT						
DESIGNING MATERIALS						
TEACHING FOR TRANSFER						
ADMINISTRATION						
COMMUNITY/INDUSTRIAL LIAISON						
MARKETING/PUBLICITY						
GUIDANCE/COUNSELLING						
CERTIFICATION/ACCREDITATION						
ASSESSMENT OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING (PRE-COURSE)						
NEGOTIATING LEARNING AGENDAS						
KNOWLEDGE OF REGULATIONS						

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OBJECTIVES

The objectives for which **The Further Education Unit (FEU)** is established are to promote, encourage and develop the efficient provision of further education in the United Kingdom and for that purpose:

a) to review and evaluate the range of existing further education curricula and programmes and to identify overlap, duplication, deficiencies and inconsistencies therein;

b) to determine priorities for action to improve the provision of further education and to make recommendations as to how such improvement can be effected;

c) to carry out studies in further education and to support investigations of and experimentation in, and the development of further education curricula and to contribute to and assist in the evaluation of initiatives in further education;

d) to disseminate and publish information and to assist in the dissemination and publication of information about recommendations for and experiments and developments in further education.